

Ages and Stages



1 to 3

Every 1- to 3-year-old child is unique. Every child has experiences and inherited characteristics that give him a distinct personality. Following are some general developmental characteristics that apply to many toddlers.

PHYSICAL

- Mastering body movements. Walks more steadily, climbs stairs, and enjoys throwing.
- Growth rate slows from infancy.
- Very active. Gets into everything!
- Likes to push and pull things.
- Often has difficulty unwinding in order to rest.

LANGUAGE

- Understands more words and ideas than is able to express.
- Vocabulary is expanding rapidly.
- Repeats words and phrases.
- Follows simple one-step directions.
- Enjoys simple nursery rhymes, songs, and finger plays.



SOCIAL

- Strongly prefers familiar people.
- Plays alone or beside other children without much interaction.
- Is easily distracted.
- Developing independence so, “no” and “mine” are frequent in conversations.
- May hit, bite, or kick when unable to express him or herself.

EMOTIONAL

- Shows pride in accomplishments.
- Likes to help with tasks around the house.
- Is easily frustrated.
- Resists changes in food, clothes, toys, and daily routine.
- Self-centered. Demands attention.
- Can experience separation anxiety when left with a child care provider or relative.

INTELLECTUAL

- Matches similar objects.
- Points to familiar objects.
- Knows basic body parts.
- Names simple pictures in books.
- Likes to take objects apart, but may not be able to put the objects back together.



Ways Parents Can Help

- ▶ Give child lots of room to practice walking.
- ▶ Protect your child’s feet with shoes when outdoors.
- ▶ Offer food, but don’t force it on the child.
- ▶ Never use food as a reward or punishment.
- ▶ Read simple stories, and play games to increase vocabulary.
- ▶ Expect slower learning from 12 to 18 months, but rapid increase in vocabulary around age 2.
- ▶ Set aside a time and place for your child to play and explore, but don’t force learning.
- ▶ Give toys that challenge a toddler’s curiosity.
- ▶ Establish clear limits, but also help your child to explore.
- ▶ Teach your child that it’s okay to express emotions but not okay physically to hurt others in the process.
- ▶ Allow some independence.
- ▶ Don’t let the explorers out of your sight. Safely store dangerous substances. “Childproof” your home.
- ▶ Listen carefully, but don’t correct pronunciation or grammar too often.

Ages and Stages



3 to 5

Every 3- to 5-year-old child is unique. Every child has experiences and inherited characteristics that give him a distinct personality. Following are some general developmental characteristics that apply to many preschoolers.

PHYSICAL

- Manages own clothes. May need help with shoe strings and back buttons.
- Very active; however, developing the ability to stay with an absorbing activity such as working a difficult puzzle or building an intricate block building.
- Runs, jumps, throws, bounces, balances.
- Lacks fine muscle development.
- Appetite decreases. Avoid sweets. Provide simple foods.

LANGUAGE

- Asks lots of questions.
- Beginning to use language as tool and will try to talk his/her way out of a situation.
- May use “bad” language.
- Fights verbally with fierce language such as “I hate you.”

SOCIAL

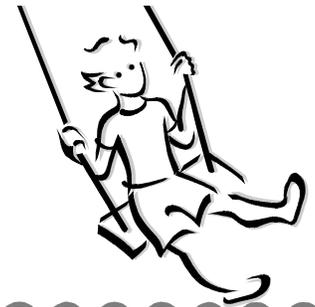
- Plays with small groups of children, though often likes to play alone.
- Imitates adults in play activities. Likes to use “grown up” things.
- Quarrels occur but are usually resolved with a minimum of adult intervention.
- Leaders and followers emerge in groups of children.
- Forms special friendships—even imaginary ones.

EMOTIONAL

- Beginning to recognize rights of others and to accept sharing and taking turns.
- Knows the rules, but sometimes “forgets” to follow them.
- Lives in a “here and now” world where only their own personal experiences have much meaning for them.
- May be fearful of the dark, storms, monsters, etc.
- Imagination can be quite active.

INTELLECTUAL

- Recognizes differences between girls and boys.
- Guesses what will happen next.
- Begins to count.
- Recognizes simple shapes.
- Follows simple directions.



Ways Parents Can Help

- ▶ Make sure your child has regular medical, dental, vision, and hearing check-ups.
- ▶ Encourage play on gym or playground equipment to develop physical skills and “burn off” energy.
- ▶ Answer questions about sex and the body simply and honestly.
- ▶ Let children think for themselves. Help them to discover the answers to questions.

- ▶ Take short trips (to a park, the zoo, the store) in order to increase mental skills and to encourage exploration using the five senses.
- ▶ Read to children when you can, and answer their questions simply and honestly.
- ▶ Help child cope with fears; don't dismiss them as foolish.
- ▶ Teach child to express emotions without screaming, hitting, or hurting others.
- ▶ Give child a chance to

- spend time with others the same age.
- ▶ Never leave children this age home alone, even if they may seem physically able to care for themselves.
- ▶ Allow them time to play quietly by themselves and to develop their own creativity.
- ▶ Let kids try to “read” by interpreting pictures. Ask them simple questions about what they see.
- ▶ Praise child for good behavior.
- ▶ Don't try to force a “lefty” to use their right hand.

Ages and Stages



6 to 9

The ages of 6 through 9 are commonly considered the middle years of childhood. This is the time when children are in full bloom. They are no longer babies, but the demands of adult life are still far away. Every 6- to 9-year-old child is unique. Every child has experiences and inherited characteristics that give him a distinct personality. Following are some general developmental characteristics that apply to many school age children.

PHYSICAL

- Baby teeth are being replaced by permanent teeth.
- Coordination is improving.
- Tends to gain weight and then gain height, so sometimes appears chubby.
- Tends to catch colds frequently.
- Needs plenty of free play time.

SOCIAL

- Peers becoming more and more important.
- Adores school teachers, Scout leader, etc.
- Likes organized games and rules.
- May have "best" friend. Plays easily and readily with other children.
- Noticeable separation between boys and girls.
- Supports and defends family's values and traditions.



EMOTIONAL

- Loves jokes and slapstick humor.
- Chronic worrier.
- Thinks in terms of "black or white," "good or bad," "right or wrong."
- Fairness is very important.
- Needs structure and guidelines from adults.
- Often daydreams.

INTELLECTUAL

- Understands concept of time.
- Can concentrate for longer periods of time.
- Often learns in spurts.
- Enjoys collecting and organizing.

LANGUAGE

- Likes reading and being read to.
- Reversing written letters and numerals decreases.
- Displays interest in other countries and cultures.
- Rebels verbally rather than with temper tantrums.
- Can be rude, loud, and obnoxious at times.

Ways Parents Can Help

- ▶ Set aside time for quiet play or rest instead of naps.
- ▶ Watch for school adjustment problems.
- ▶ Don't ask children to look at small objects or print for too long—their eyes can't focus well.
- ▶ Assign a few safe household chores to help kids learn to follow directions.
- ▶ Teach kids to remember their full name, age, address, phone number, and birthday.
- ▶ Build your child's self-confidence: label the deed, not the child; offer praise; reassure your child that everyone has special talents.
- ▶ Schedule yearly medical and dental checkups.
- ▶ Provide nutritious meals and snacks. Good eating habits and plenty of exercise will help prevent obesity.
- ▶ Don't interfere with your child's attempt to master something.
- ▶ Give praise for accomplishments. Don't be overly critical of mistakes and failures. Teach your child how to learn from them.
- ▶ Set up simple rules for your child to remember. Be consistent about enforcing them.
- ▶ Don't compare your child to others, especially brothers or sisters. Help each child appreciate his or her special talents.
- ▶ Teach your child how to cope with difficult times; deal with emotions in public; show self-control; and think of other's feelings.
- ▶ Don't pressure your child to join teams, clubs, or activities. Children in this age group need to develop their own interests, on their own terms.
- ▶ Never leave children this age home alone or expect them to supervise younger children in your absence.

Ages and Stages



9 to 12

The ages of 9 through 12 are commonly referred to as the preteen years. The preteen years are a time of rapid growth, deepening friendships, new responsibilities, and academic challenges. Although every child is unique, following are some general developmental characteristics that apply to many preteens.

PHYSICAL

- Attracted to organized games and activities such as baseball or cheerleading.
- Puberty begins earlier for girls than for boys.
- Appetite and growth increase.
- High energy level.
- Transitional stage.
- Eye/hand coordination is good.

SOCIAL

- Able to take responsibility for their own actions.
- Girls especially are more aware of their appearance.
- Wants to “fit in” with peers.
- Expresses anger and frustration verbally and in actions such as door slamming, sulking, and being aggressive with siblings.
- Talks less to parents and more to peers.

EMOTIONAL

- Becoming more and more responsible.
- Has more self-control.
- May defy adult authority by taking risks such as riding a bike in heavy traffic, shoplifting, or trying cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs.
- Interested in members of the opposite sex. May tease, joke, or “show off” to gain attention.

INTELLECTUAL

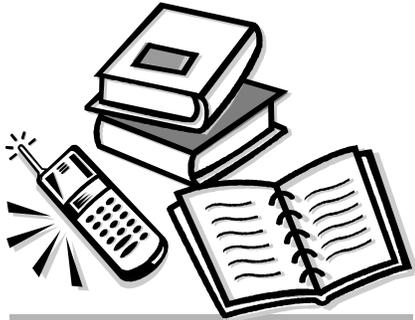
- Has mastered basic reading and math skills.
- Improving ability to problem-solve.
- Acquiring abstract reasoning ability.
- More creative in arts and social awareness.
- Gathers information and forms own ideas.
- Playing musical instruments, and arts and crafts activities are popular.
- Completes long-term assignments in school.

Ways Parents Can Help

- ▶ Talk openly with your child about the dangers of using cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for your child to succeed and have his/her achievements recognized by others. Help them find activities they enjoy and do well.
- ▶ Allow your child to make some of their own choices (within safe limits). Encourage problem-solving.
- ▶ Discuss family values—talk about what you believe and why.
- ▶ Encourage relationships between your child and other adults who you feel are positive role models.
- ▶ Provide your child with accurate, factual information about the physical changes he/she is experiencing as he/she approaches puberty.



Ages and Stages



13+

The teenage years are often the most challenging stage of development for parents and teens alike, but these years can also be the most rewarding, as parents begin to recognize and respect the adult their teen is becoming. The teen years are a time of growing independence and responsibility, as well as both physical and emotional maturation. Although every young person is unique, following are some general characteristics that apply to many teens.

PHYSICAL

- Sudden growth spurt (in height or weight).
- Appearance of secondary sex characteristics (breasts in girls, facial hair and voice changes in boys).
- Puberty begins earlier for girls than for boys.
- Appetite and energy level vary drastically, sometimes from day to day.
- Requires more sleep.

SOCIAL

- Strong desire for independence.
- Values privacy.
- Able to take responsibility for their own actions.
- Concerned with appearance.
- Values peers' opinions highly, often more than parents'.
- Expresses anger and frustration verbally and in their actions.

EMOTIONAL

- Can be very responsible.
- Highly sensitive to criticism.
- May defy adult authority by taking risks such as shoplifting or experimenting with sex, drugs, or alcohol.
- Impulsive behavior such as outbursts of temper or laughter.
- Sexual feelings are often tied to, and confused with, feelings of love.

INTELLECTUAL

- Improved abilities in abstract reasoning and problem-solving.
- More creative; this may be demonstrated through writing, music, or art.
- Gathers information and forms own ideas.
- Often preoccupied by sexual thoughts.
- More socially aware, which may lead to questioning of parental rules and values.

Ways Parents Can Help

- Be aware of signs of depression: changes in weight, appetite, sleep, interests, energy level, ability to concentrate.
- Establish a relationship with your teen based on mutual respect.
- Include your teen in some appropriate adult activities outside the home.
- Be involved in your teen's life, but don't encourage dependence.
- Allow your teen to make some of their own decisions.
- Choose your battles carefully.
- Try not to criticize your teen's choices in music, friends, hairstyle, and clothing.
- Establish clear limits on things like dating and curfews.
- LISTEN more often than you talk.



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